



Vol. 8 – October 2019

# HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

n e w s l e t t e r

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the dead. short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with foe;  
To you, from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.*

**Next meeting...**

**Promoting Peace - Canadian Style!**



## Welcome to the October newsletter.

### Who or what inspired your genealogical interest?

For me, it was seeing my Grandfather's family cabinet card photo, when I was 28. This single image landed during the hustle & bustle of my life, but it dawned on me that I really knew little about my ancestors. Interestingly, this occurred the same year that Ancestry.com first started.

Living in London at the time, ON, I began by seeking info on my father, who owned 2 Ford City pharmacies in the 1920's. Windsor Public Library specialist, Ruth Vukadinov mailed me 4 city directory pages & asked "Have you heard about HEIRS?". The answer was no. But my naive note to her HEIRS contact resulted in a wonderfully-crafted, encouraging & informative return letter that opened my eyes wide. It actually stimulated a lifetime of family discovery for me. Past President Edith Woodbridge was that special lady & to this day still encourages me (& likely everyone else as well) to write a book about my family's history. So far, only a website. (See our last issue.)

Edith encouraged "living relatives" to write me & the late HEIRS Secretary, Marion McCormick was instrumental in getting me up to speed on my Essex County family tree. With her patient responses to my seemingly unending questions, (which continue to this day with one of her sons), I was quickly immersed and hooked.

In this issue, Ted Steele discusses sharing his plethora of items with other interested family members. I suggest you take some time now with your younger family members & perhaps be their inspiration to begin "uncovering" their own family history. A special hello & best wishes go out to Edith Woodbridge. - Rick McCormick

**Your next meeting is coming soon... See you there?**

## Next Meeting

**Thursday, October 24th 1:30 PM**

**Harrow-Colchester Arena Community Meeting Room**

**As this is our last meeting before Remembrance Day, we pause to mark this special time.** Our guest speaker is Mr. Bill Wilson, now a Kingsville resident. Born & raised in SW Ontario, he left to seek adventure. Wanting to help people, he first went through basic training & then trained to be a Medic. In 2008, he accepted the job of Liaison Officer in Illinois, assisting with training & movement of medical evacuations out of Iraq & Afghanistan. In 2009, he became a reservist. His overseas deployments include Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia &

Afghanistan, mainly as a Medic. Bill helped run a hospital, patrolled with infantry as company medic & served as the Senior Medical authority on a Canadian Navy frigate. He's seen both good & bad as part of Canadian attempts to act as peacekeepers. His presentation will give us a glimpse of what has been done & what must be done to promote peace. **We will learn much from his talk & realize the debt of thanks we owe to dedicated people like him & many others. Let us remember all who serve on our behalf - they make us proud.**

*On Thursday, September 26th, HEIRS met to hear the story of Boblo Island during its golden years as an amusement park, its eventual closing, and what remains of the rides and entertainment venues.*



*Courtesy: Shelby Wye, Harrow News & County Print*

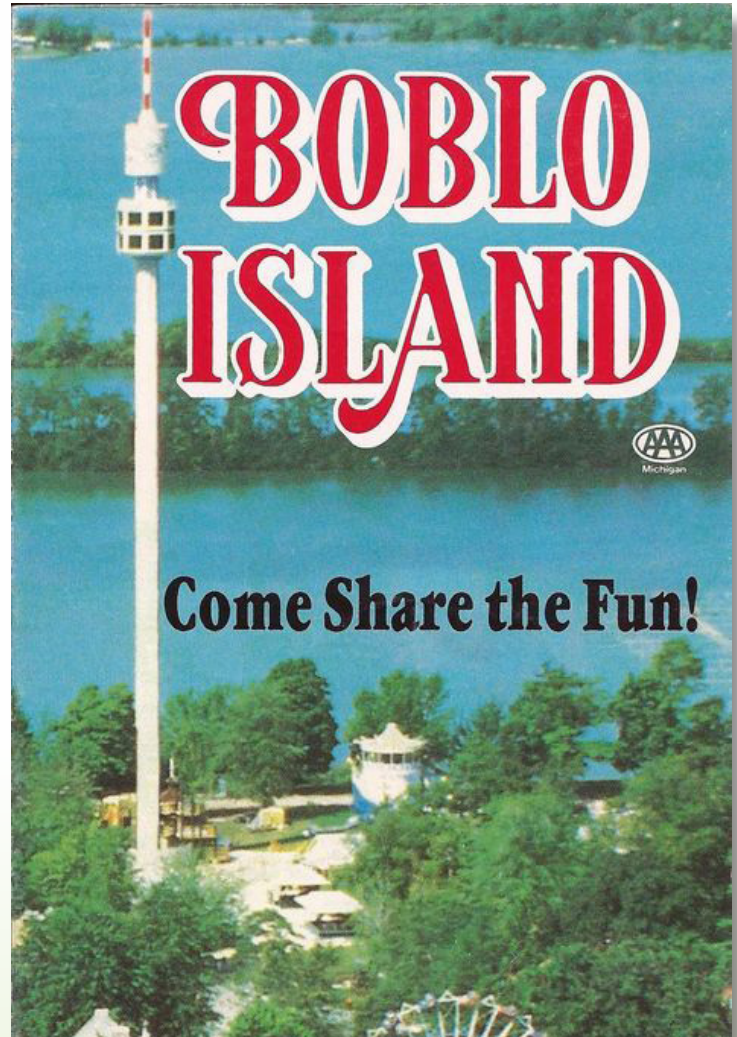
*HEIRS director Ted Steele pictured above, outlined its beginnings as a picnic destination in the late 1890s and the early 1900s. It quickly became a favourite spot for group parties and rides on the 2 big boats from Detroit were themselves a major attraction.*

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***Slowly a dance hall and golf course were added, then a carousel; by the 1940s, various rides began to make their appearance, and Boblo Island became a summertime institution on both sides of the border.***

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*In the early 1950s, the Browning family bought the island & began converting it to a full-blown amusement park on a large scale. Ted showed visuals of most of the rides & added his memories of working on the “Dark Ride” (Flight To Mars for some folks), as well as being the engineer on one of the trains that took passengers in a large loop around the island.*



*HEIRS members in the audience added their memories of working in the restaurant, or at different jobs there covering a span of considerable years. Ted outlined an armed robbery on the island in 1959 & several serious, sometimes fatal accidents through the summer seasons. These brought lawsuits & liability suits, which crippled the income ability of the island. When the 1960s brought civil unrest, gang violence & racial problems on the boats & on the island itself, the writing was on the wall.*

***Sadness at its passing was mixed with the great memories of enjoying its attractions. Everyone seemed to enjoy revisiting this unique place... at least for an hour or so.***

***We are fortunate to have the memories of such a special time and place.***



# The Amherstburg Echo.

THE OFFICIAL PAPER OF THE COUNTY

Vol. XXX No. 15.

AMHERSTBURG, ONTARIO, FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 1904.

Whole No. 2,474

## 100 ACRES FOR SALE.

In 2nd concession, Anderdon Township, about 4 miles from Amherstburg, 20 acres of bush, some small buildings. For further particulars and price, see

FALLS BROS., Agts., Amherstburg.

## THE SOVEREIGN BANK OF CANADA.

HEAD OFFICE, TORONTO, ONT.

CAPITAL PAID UP \$3,000,000  
SURPLUS AND UNDIVIDED PROFITS, 350,000  
ASSETS, 50,000

H. S. HOLT, ESQ., President. D. M. STEWART, General Manager.

## SAVINGS BANK DEPARTMENT.

Interest allowed on Deposits of \$1.00 and upwards at highest current rate. Farmers' Notes Discounted at lowest possible rates.

## HARROW BRANCH. AMHERSTBURG BRANCH.

C. A. MacMAHON, Manager. M. I. LANE, Manager.

### LOST.

LOST—Strayed from my place, Vereker, on Sunday, Feb. 29th, a black white and tan English setter bitch, answering to the name "Lady". Finder will receive liberal reward by returning to me or on being notified I will go after her. A. H. L. Vereker.

### ADDITIONAL LOCAL.

Miss W. HANCOCK's condition kept about the same. Mrs. Alice McLEAN, of Windsor, is on convalescent leave after a long illness. Mrs. Wilson is recovering from a severe cold, caused by a

### MALDEN.

Ernest McGee, of Flint, Mich. spent Sunday at home.

Mrs. Frank Hunt has been suffering from an attack of la grippe.

Win. Golden is suffering from being attacked of influenza rheumatism.

Mrs. Alice McLean, of Windsor, is on convalescent leave after a long illness. Mrs. Wilson is recovering from a severe cold, caused by a

## BROOKER vs. AMHERSTBURG.

Judge McHugh Refuses to Grant New Trial.

At the recent sittings of the Division Court in Amherstburg, Mrs. James Brooker sued the corporation of Amherstburg, for injuries sustained, alleged to have been due to a fall on a defective sidewalk. She was awarded \$80 and costs. The town, through their solicitors, Davis & Davis, applied for a new trial on the ground, of the plaintiff's alleged carelessness. The learned Judge refused to grant the appeal and the text of his decision is as below:

BROOKER vs. AMHERSTBURG.—Mr. Rough for Plaintiff, D. B. Davis for defendant. The action was tried before me at the last sittings of the Division Court at Amherstburg. It is brought by the plaintiff to recover damages for personal injuries sustained by the female plaintiff by falling on a sidewalk on Fort St. where the plaintiff alleges was in a dangerous state of disrepair. It is opposed by counsel for the defendant that if the plaintiff has a good cause of action the damages claimed are less than they would be entitled to recover. The law requires a municipal corporation to keep its streets and highways in a state of repair and if it neglects to perform that duty the law provides that it shall be civilly responsible for all damages sustained by any person by reason of such neglect. The law and corporation applies, to see said the judge does not require the defendant to prove that it is not liable for the injury. The law does not require the plaintiff to prove that the sidewalk was in a dangerous state of disrepair. The law does not require the plaintiff to prove that the sidewalk was in a dangerous state of disrepair. The law does not require the plaintiff to prove that the sidewalk was in a dangerous state of disrepair.

## ANDERDON COUNCIL.

Saturday, Feb. 27th.

Council met in regular session with all members present. Moved by Messrs. Grouin and Cote, that the minutes just read be adopted.—Carried. Moved by Messrs. Volans and Cote, that Fred Pagnou get a warrant for \$4 groceries furnished to the Veronesi.—Carried. Moved by Messrs. Cote and Grouin that Isaac Grouin get a clearing ice from 60 and Wilbert Sutte bridge on south side of Amherstburg. Moved by Messrs. Grouin and Cote that Isaac Grouin get a refund of dog tax.—Carried. Moved by Messrs. Cote and Grouin that Isaac Grouin get a refund of dog tax.—Carried. Moved by Messrs. Cote and Grouin that Isaac Grouin get a refund of dog tax.—Carried.

## BURK BROS.



## LIME FOR SALE IN CARLOAD LOTS.

October 3

Jasper Tofflemire sold the George Huffman place o 24.5 acres to William Woodbridge. Tofflemire hass purchased the Jackson Quick farm of 86 acres on Potlake Road from Ivan Brown, who will move in with his father, David Brown.

Marriage of Margaret Louella Craig, 3rd daughter of Mr/Mrs Thomas Craig, to Joseph Wright, youngest son of Mr/Mrs Edwin Wright.

October 10

The question of consolidating several school sections with Harrow as the centre is being freely discussed. This idea has become very popular in Canada and the U.S.; 2 consolidations might be arranged - the 5 or 6 sections surrounding Harrow, and those in the eastern portion with Arner as a centre.

This reduces cost and introduces the graded school system, with an opportunity for rural schools to procure advanced education. The only problem is that the roads are not in it condition for travel the year round. Good roads are now in sight, and so the main objection to a consolidated system would be removed.

Wonderful success 2 magnificent days - nearly 4000 on the fair ground on second day- biggest automobile show in the history of the "Banana Belt", etc.

October 17

The experiment in growing tomatoes on their own factory ground was quite a success, nearly 3000 bushels being harvested. This is more than the whole district produced 3 years ago.

October 24

D. Barron is erecting a large coal shed on a cement basement at his warehouse on the Pere Marquette.

Real estate boom - Herbert Ferriss sold his 60 acre farm to William Mills of Ruthven for \$13, 000. Mark Heaton of Amherstburg bought 100 acres from Harvey Smith. Gil Morin sold his 25 acre farm to Mr. Graham, brother-in-law of W. T. Corcoran for \$5 000. Price of land is soaring from \$500 an acre to \$1000 an acre now that the early fruits and vegetables are becoming established.





**October 20th (Noon - 4pm)**  
**J.R. Park Homestead**

## ***Harvest & Horses***

*Celebrate the Fall harvest season on the farm. Listen to ghost stories in the Homestead attic.*

Try some corn husk crafts • See how apple cider is made • See the amazing parade of breeds • Test your abilities in the blind buggy competition • Meet the horses that made harvest possible 200 years ago

**Cost varies depending on activities chosen**



**October 25th (7:30 - 9 PM)**

## ***After Dark: Tragic Tales & Pioneer Perils***

Join costumed guides and step back in time to walk in the footsteps of people from the past.

These dark, but true stories will lead you to appreciate the many hazards of daily pioneer life.

**This Halloween-inspired event is geared towards adults.**

**Come out for a rare opportunity to see the homestead after dark!**

**Admission: \$15.00 / person. For more info please contact [jrph@erca.org](mailto:jrph@erca.org). Register for this event soon – space is limited!**

## 6 Growing your Family Tree

### **GROWING YOUR FAMILY TREE**

- by Ted Steele, Director

**We have been writing lately about family files & what needs to be done with them for future preservation. I am in the midst of this now, and have been making some very difficult decisions. In this column, I'll outline what steps I have taken, and it may help others to do the same.**

The volume of my files is very large, both the Steeles & also the Foxes, my wife's family. In fact, my collection of data continues to grow... and my problem grows as well. **My approach to solve this dilemma?**

I first sorted through the files & photocopied or scanned **everything** that I felt had value to me. Computer files in 2 or 3 places were set up; then the problem becomes...**"What do I do with the original documents and photos that I have scanned?"**

My first move was to ensure that the person who 'gifted them' to me, did not want them back. Then, I contacted those family members most closely related to the people in the photos; for example, my folder on one Uncle was offered to his 2 children & his grandchildren (but unfortunately they were unwanted).

If these items remain unwanted, I will offer them to an appropriate public library or museum / history group. Since this Uncle was tied to Chatham's history through the 1940s, that might be an avenue for me to consider & a 'natural' spot where his items could live.

Another uncle has much that the Essex Kent Scottish Regiment would value, and they will at some point be offered to them.

A file on my grandmother, Jennie, may be wanted by her descendants, if I can locate them. Otherwise, since she was from Sherkston near Port Colborne, I will offer them to the Port Colborne Historical Museum/Library. This should work well for those items that are identified. Photos which identify the people are in demand, but many of these have no names attached & I can't guess who they are. These photos at some point may have to be disposed of by "tossing them out".

**If you have unnamed photos, & can do so, please put the names with the photos.**



**Fortunately, someone identified by name on the back of this photo, one David Steele, my 3x Great Grandfather. Otherwise, this distinguished gentleman would be just another 'lost soul' in our photo collection.**





*This wonderfully staged photograph would be just that, had the 'players' not been identified for us. Compare it to the 2 unidentified photos, known to us only as "the moustache man" & "young girl".*

*Documents will remain in my files, as proof & support of my findings. That leaves the biggest problem... the mound of photos, some of them beautiful professionally taken shots, but with no indication of who the heck they are. **Maybe they are not even family members!***

*I am playing detective, using a magnifier to look for details that might help identify the image. At some point, when I am done with them, these may also have to be tossed.*

***HEIRS cannot store photos of unknown people either. We cannot be a museum.***

*It will be difficult to toss out photos of my grandparents, even though they are copied in my computer. Recently I donated a "powder flask" from the 1840s or so; it held gunpowder in the old "flintlock" days. A cousin gave it to me & I found a good home for it when I no longer wanted it. A 110-year old tool box, handmade of heavy wood, is in my basement, but I am hoping I find someone who is interested in acquiring it.*

*Even the handmade wooden rocking horse I rode in the late 1940's while watching the Lone Ranger & Cisco Kid, needs a home. It may wind up in an antique store, as it approaches 90 years of age.*

*Remember that just because something is old, that does not mean it has value. Ask yourself- does this have value **for me**? If not, who would value it?*



***Good luck on your project, but don't put it off.***

***Your children are less likely to do anything with the items you leave behind.***

***If you want to be sure it gets done, be the one to do it.***

## History As It Used to Was...

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director



# WITCHES



October signalled the end of the harvest season, when crops had to be gathered and prepared or preserved. Days grew shorter & temperatures cooled, pointing out the wisdom in an old saying my mother (a real farm girl) used to say to us... "Make hay while the sun shines". I can picture an old farmer passing that on to his children & grandchildren.

The end of October meant field work should be done & plans made for an "All Saints Eve" party. This usually included a huge bonfire & telling of ghost stories... sometimes old ones retold & some newly 'created' for the occasion. I recall well the Disney classic, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow - The Headless Horseman".

Much food & alcohol was consumed, with a barn dance for the teens. Little children watched the dancers 'til they fell asleep, while older folks sat back, watched & imbibed remembering their younger days. In these olden times, the devil was seen as a real being, looking to trap their souls forever & witches were everywhere, able to put curses on enemies & caused terrible calamities if offended. Darkness held only imagined terrors & with more darkness than light at this time of year, this allowed evil spirits to roam at will.

**Halloween: If we cast our minds back to the early 1800s, it's easy to imagine a world of superstitious fears.**

An older lady, widowed & alone, might wear all black in mourning. With little income, she cooked & ate whatever she could gather,

sometimes disgusting to be sure. A cat was good company, so many kept one as a pet & talked to it (or herself), since there might well be few others to speak with. With little to do, she might fixate on cleaning, so sweeping the floor became important (always having the broom nearby). Advancing years may have brought on a form of dementia, so the old woman could be confused, illogical & perhaps admitting to things she never even did.

In any case, often nobody defended her & she might become a target of ridicule or even suspicion, easily easily becoming a scapegoat for bad things that happened, even though she had no connection to them. If witchcraft was suspected, here was a ready-made potential 'witch' to blame. At best, she was likely an object of fear & children would be warned against "people like that".

Religious fervour at times flared, persecution followed... trial by various means were established usually making it impossible to prove innocence, but fairly easy to prove guilt. The Salem Witch Trials of the early Puritan colonies points this out emphatically, as at least 10 people were hung as witches (no, witches were not burned!)

Witches became a Halloween staple & some superstitions survive to this day, but more & more are moving away from its roots, to a night for little ones. **But who doesn't love to feel at least... a little bit scared?**



## History As It Used to Was...

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director



# Blessings



We enter October, and as the seasons change Thanksgiving comes to mind. In the early years, it was a time of deeply ingrained religious ideas, & a time when daily help from the Creator was very much needed. With no real medical help available for emergencies, little help when babies were born, & limited support in the event of an attack by natives, it was important to have faith that all would work out with His help.

Work was a never-ending part of each day, with food & firewood for the winter always on their minds. After 6 days of back-breaking labour, everyone could take a day of rest, attend a prayer service (perhaps at a neighbour's house), and reconnect with locals who were the only source of gossip, assistance & advice. This day reaffirmed their trust in God, and allowed them to keep struggling with what had to be done.

As the end of October approached, crops were harvested, the winter needs of the animals were made ready, and as much edible supplies as possible were prepared. Many candles were made to light the long, cold, dark nights, with heavy clothing being a definite need.



Of course, we know that local natives in what we know as Canada, helped settlers in many ways. From them, we learned of plants to use medicinally, like willow bark (source of aspirin), foxglove (source of digitalis, a heart medication) and maple tree sap (for everyone's favourite syrup). They showed the pioneers which plants to eat, and those to avoid. Skills to help the settlers survive in this raw land were also passed along, such as animal trapping methods.

I have read conflicting stories about "The First Thanksgiving", most saying the settlers invited the cold, hungry local native people to join them at a feast. However, some versions claim the settlers were the ones starving & the natives brought most of the food to share. At least it points out that whoever brought the food, it was an act of sharing & hospitality, before relations became forever strained.



**Now as it was then, this is indeed a time to stop to count our many blessings - would you prefer to live in any other country?**



# HEIRS RESOURCE CENTRE

**Open September - June** (December excepted)

Tuesday & Thursday: 10AM - 3PM

Call to confirm Wednesday or other appointments.

## Newsletter

Published 9 times per year, in conjunction with General Meetings held on the 4th Thursday of the month, September to June, (December excepted).

Receive full colour newsletters by email, or a B&W print version by regular post. Simply provide your email or street address to our office.

## Memberships

\$25 CDN / U.S. per person or couple.

Memberships run May 1st - April 30th, annually.

## Send membership cheque to:

HEIRS PO Box 53, Harrow  
ON, Canada N0R 1G0

Please include phone, postal address, email & family names you are now researching.

## Non-member using Research Library

\$10 per visit (+ photocopy costs).

## Mailing Address

243 McAfee St., PO Box 53,  
Harrow, ON Canada N0R 1G0

Harrow & Colchester South  
Community Centre (Arena Bldg.)

**Phone** 519 738-3700

**Email** [hheritage@bellnet.ca](mailto:hheritage@bellnet.ca)

**Website** [www.HEIRS.ca](http://www.HEIRS.ca)

Kudos go to Greg Harrison at The Computer Centre in Harrow, who provides HEIRS support for all things technical to help keep our office running smoothly.

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